Hartford, Ct. Sept. 13, 1830.

Rev. George Shepard:

Your very interesting and important letter of the 18th ult. was duly received; but circumstances have prevented my giving it a suitable reply till the present moment.

Towards the unknown individual, who generously offers a premium of $50 for the best tract on the subject of slavery, I feel an attachment of soul which words cannot express; and for yourself, sir, I beg you to accept my thanks for the sympathy which you express in behalf of the poor slave. Alas! that so few in our land feel an interest in the great cause of emancipation! But let us not despair. The time must come — for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken it — when all oppression shall cease, and every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree — there being none to molest or make him afraid. We may not live to see that glorious day; but may hasten it by our prayers, our toils, and our sacrifices; nor shall we lose our reward — for the King of Heaven may peradventure bestow that noblest of panegyrics upon us, "Well done, good and faithful servants!"

At the present day, American slavery is unequalled for cruelty: — antiquity cannot produce its parallel. And yet it is boastingly proclaimed to the world, that this is the land of the free, and the asylum of the oppressed! Was liberty ever so degraded in the eyes of mankind, or justice mocked with such impunity?

For myself, I hold no fellowship with slaveowners. I will not make a truce with them even for a single hour. I blush for them as countrymen — I know that they are not christians; and the higher they raise their professions of patriotism or piety, the stronger is my detestation of their hypocrisy. They are dishonest and cruel — and God, and the angels, and devils, and the universe know that they are without excuse.

"They hear not — see not — know not; for their eyes
Are covered with thick mists — they will not see:
The sick earth groans with man's impieties,
And heaven is tired with man's perversity."

With regard to the outlines of the contemplated tract which you have given, I think they are highly important — but so broad, that their discussion could not be easily or efficiently embraced within twelve duodecimo pages. I would therefore suggest, with deference, the expediency of confining the object of the tract to one of these two points — namely, "The Duty of Ministers and Churches, of all denominations, to clear their skirts from the blood of the slaves, and to make the holding of slaves a barrier to communion and church-membership" — or, secondly, in your own language, "Suggestions as to the best ways and means to restore the slaves to their unalienable rights, and elevate them to that standing in society, to which, as brethren of the human family, and fellow heirs to immortality, they are entitled."

Both of the above points are eminently weighty, and would require separate treatises in their elucidation. I am decidedly in favor of the one first mentioned; because all plans will be likely to prove nugatory, as long the church refuses to act on the subject — it must be purified, as by fire. It must not support, it must not palliate the horrid system. It seems morally impossible, that a man can be a slaveholder and a follower of the Lamb at the same time. A christian slaveholder is as great a solecism as a religious atheist, a sober drunkard, or an honest thief. In 1826, the Synod of Ohio held an animated discussion on a question which had been before referred to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, viz. "Is the holding of slaves man-stealing?" in the affirmative of which, a large majority concurred. This is a rational view of the subject; consequently no slaveholder ought to be embraced within the pale of a christian church.

Is not the fact enough to make one hang his head, that christian men and christian ministers (for so they dare to call themselves) are slave-owners? Are there not Balaams in our land, who prophesy in the name of the Lord, but covet the presents of Balak? What! shall he who styles himself an ambassador of Christ — who preaches what angels sung, "Peace on earth, good will to man" — who tells me, Sabbath after Sabbath, that with God there is no respect of persons — that my Creator commands me to do unto others as I would that they should do unto me — to love my neighbor as myself — to call no man master — to be meek, and merciful, and blameless — to let my light so shine before men, that they may see my good works, and glorify my Father who is in heaven — to shun every

appearance of evil - to rather suffer myself to be defrauded than defraud; - nay, who tells me, as the injunction of my Judge, to love even my enemies, to bless them that curse me, to do good to them that hate me, and to pray for them that despitefully use and persecute me - (alas! how has he needed the prayers and forgiveness of his poor degraded, persecuted slaves!) - I say, shall such a teacher presume to call the creatures of God his property - to deal in bones, and sinews, and souls - to whip, and manacle, and brand - merely because his victims differ in complexion from himself, and because the tyrannous laws of a State, and the corrupt usages of society, justify his conduct? Yet so it is. By his example, he sanctifies, in the eyes of ungodly men, a system of blood, and violates every commandment of Jehovah. Horrible state of things!

"For this thing which it cannot bear, the earth is disquieted. The Gospel of Peace and Mercy preached by him who steals, buys or sells the purchase of Messiah's blood! - Rulers of the Church making merchandize of their brethren's souls! - and Christians trading the persons of men! - These are they who are lovers of their own selves - Covetous - Proud - Fierce - Men of corrupt minds, who resist the truth - Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof - From such turn away."

I think that an able and faithful tract upon this, is greatly needed, and would be the means of incalculable good. - I submit the choice of topics to yourself, and to the benevolent individual who offers the premium.

There is no Society in existence, bearing the title of the "American Abolition Society." I think the tract had better come out to the public, under the auspices of the "Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, - the relief of free Negroes unlawfully held in bondage, - and for improving the Condition of the African Race." Agreeably to your request, I select three members of that Society to decide upon the merits of the various tracts that may be presented - namely, the venerable William Rawle, L.L.D. President - and Jonas Preston, M.D. and Thomas Shipley, Vice-Presidents of said Society - all thorough-going reformers, and highly intelligent and respectable men, residents of Philadelphia. The premium money may be deposited in the hands of the President, Wm. Rawle.

I am now on an eastern tour for the purpose of delivering public addresses on the subject of slavery, of obtaining subscriptions to my proposed new paper at Washington City, of establishing a National Anti-Slavery Tract Society, &c. &c. I shall leave Hartford for Boston this morning, where I shall probably reside some time, and to which place please to address your next letter as soon as convenient.

Your friend and well-wisher till death, Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

☞ If Mr. Shepard should not happen to be in Plainfield on the arrival of this letter, E. L. Fuller, Esq. will be kind enough to send it to its proper place of destination, and greatly oblige his grateful servt.

Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

Wm L Garrison
S/S Sept 13th 1830
to Mr Shepard

Geo. E. Fuller Esq
Plainfield Ct

Geo Shepard Hallowell
Me

Lotta Stratton
W. T. Central Dr